



California Department of Veterans Affairs

NEWS FOR VETERANS

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CALIFORNIANS JOIN NATION IN SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS

Have you visited a hospitalized veteran this year? California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) Secretary Tom Johnson encourages veterans and all Californians to visit and honor veterans in hospitals during National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week, February 13-19, 2005. Many veterans in VA hospitals, California Veterans Homes, and nursing homes would greatly enjoy visits from veterans and other folks wishing to show their support for veterans, our nation's defenders of the American way and providers of freedom and democracy abroad.

"Many Californians demonstrate their support for veterans and their willingness to honor them by letting veterans know how much they appreciate their sacrifices all year long," said Johnson. "During National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week there is an added emphasis on showing these veterans who are hospitalized that they are truly remembered. Visiting them and sharing your time, an encouraging word, and a warm smile will be appreciated by the veteran and rewarding for the visitor."

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) has sponsored the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week since 1978 as a way of encouraging citizens to pay tribute and express appreciation to hospitalized veterans, to increase community awareness of the role of VA Medical Centers and state veterans' homes, and to encourage citizens to visit hospitalized veterans and hopefully become volunteers.

Veterans and other Californians wishing to participate by visiting hospitalized veterans may consider visiting the members of the State's three veterans homes located in Barstow, Chula Vista, and Yountville. Addresses to these homes are available on CDVA's website at www.cdva.ca.gov or by calling 800-952-5626. The USDVA maintains a VA Medical Facility locator on its website to assist people wishing to visit veterans in VA Medical Centers throughout the country as well as here in California. This online locator is available at <http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1>

An example of people reaching out to hospitalized veterans took place this past Saturday, when 25 members of the local Chula Vista Camp Fire Girls and their parents visited with residents of the Chula Vista veterans home. They met with member residents in most levels of care and handed out Valentine's Day gifts and cards and shared the mid-day meal, thus brightening the veterans' day. This meeting between generations warmed the hearts and brought smiles to all involved and ended with promises to "keep in touch."

NEWS FROM THE USDVA

ADMINISTRATION SEEKS \$70.8 BILLION FOR VA IN 2006

WASHINGTON – February 7, 2005 – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson announced today that President Bush will seek a record \$70.8 billion in the fiscal year 2006 budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), with the overwhelming majority of these resources targeted for health care and disability compensation.

The FY '06 budget proposal calls for \$33.4 billion in discretionary funding -- mostly for health care -- and \$37.4 billion in mandatory funding, mostly for compensation, pension and other benefit programs. This represents an increase of 2.7 percent over this year's discretionary budget.

FY '06 Budget Highlights

This budget proposal guarantees that the department will be able to care for those veterans who count on VA the most.

- With this budget proposal, the President, working in partnership with Congress, will have increased health care funding for veterans by 47 percent since FY '01.
- The budget ensures continuation of the Presidential priority where VA is working closely with the Department of Defense to ensure that service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and their families are provided timely, high-quality services.
- VA will be able to care for more than 5.2 million patients. With this budget, the department will be able to care for a record number of our
- high-priority patients, those veterans counting on us the most, including veterans of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.
- The FY '06 budget proposal includes \$750 million for the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) program, bringing the total department investment to date to \$2.15 billion. The FY '06 proposal includes 28 new outpatient clinics, funding for design work for two new medical facilities in Biloxi, Miss., and Fayetteville, Ark., as well as additional funding for five other major construction projects in Las Vegas, Nev.; Cleveland, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Gainesville, Fla., and Anchorage, Alaska.
- The FY '06 budget request calls for a total investment of \$2.2 billion in enhanced mental health services, which is \$100 million above this year's funding level. This budget proposal ensures a full continuum of care for veterans with mental health issues, to include comprehensive treatment for those veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.
- The FY '06 budget calls for \$1.2 billion for prosthetics and sensory aids, a \$100 million increase over FY '05.
- Funding for non-institutional long-term care would increase by more than 18 percent over FY '05, with a total investment of \$400 million in the President's proposed budget.
- Continuing the largest expansion of the national cemetery system since the Civil War, the FY '06 budget proposal includes \$90 million for construction projects, including funds for the purchase of land for six new national cemeteries in Bakersfield, Calif.; Birmingham, Ala.; Columbia-Greenville, S.C.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Sarasota, Fla.; and southeastern Pennsylvania; and expansion of the Fort Rosecrans Annex in Miramar, Calif. The budget also includes \$32 million for new state cemetery grants.

Additional USDVA budget highlights for education assistance, CARES, home loans, and cemeteries, can be found by clicking on the following URL: <http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/PressArtInternet.cfm?id=941>

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